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Date: June 11, 2003

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Unemployment Benefits Extended for Some Airline Workers and Others

OLYMPIA – The Washington State Employment Security Department began mailing informational notices this week to laid-off airline workers and others in related fields who could qualify for additional federally funded unemployment benefits.

Employment Security began mailing notices on June 9 to more than 112,000 current and former unemployment insurance claimants. These claimants were identified as potentially eligible for additional assistance under a law that lengthens the number of weeks that benefits can be paid to certain workers in airline-related industries who lost jobs because of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, or the war in Iraq.

Not everyone who receives a notice will actually meet the strict eligibility requirements of this federal legislation.

Called TEUC-A benefits, the extension signed into law by the President on April 16, 2003, as an amendment to the Temporary Extended Unemployment Act of 2002. The original law extends payments for many unemployed workers who have exhausted their regular unemployment benefits. The amendment is targeted at a narrow sector and gives additional assistance to some unemployed workers who have exhausted both regular and extended unemployment benefits.

Notices are being mailed over a 10-day period. Claimants who have exhausted all other benefits will receive notices first.

To be paid, claimants must apply for TEUC-A by calling their Unemployment Claims TeleCenter. Claimants are urged to wait until they receive a notice before calling.

Eligible claimants can receive up to 39 weeks of TEUC-A or 52 weeks if Washington has a high unemployment rate. However, any general Temporary Extended Unemployment Compensation benefits already paid are deducted from the TEUC-A entitlement.

Retroactive payments can be made for weeks between April 20, 2003, and the time the claimant's application is processed. A person who qualifies for all state and federal extensions now in effect could receive a maximum of 91 weeks of benefits, compared to 65 weeks for those who do not qualify for TEUC-A.

(More)

TEUC-A is not a general extension of unemployment insurance. Only those meeting the specific eligibility requirements stated below can receive these benefits:

1. Individuals must have worked in at least one of the following industries during the base year, the 12-month period of time on which the regular claim is based:
 - An air carrier, including cargo and charter carriers. (Employees of foreign carriers are not eligible unless they were employed at an airport in the U.S.).
 - A business located on airport property. This includes restaurants, gift shops, rental car companies, hotels, etc.
 - A business located on privately owned property that provides airport-support services such as airport parking, car rentals, or aircraft maintenance and service. Travel agents are also included.
 - A business that provides products or services directly to an air carrier. Examples include a company that manufactures aircraft for a U.S. air carrier, a catering service that provides prepared food to the air carrier, or a company that supplies aircraft parts directly to the air carrier.
 - A business that provides products or services to another business that are used by the other business for products delivered directly to an air carrier. Examples include a company that produces aircraft parts for the aircraft manufacturer, which in turn sells the aircraft to the air carrier; or a company that supplies a caterer with food, which in turn is prepared for an air carrier.
2. In addition, the worker must have been laid off from work at least partially due to one of the following reasons:
 - A reduction in air carrier service caused by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, or resulting security measures.
 - The closure of a U.S. airport caused by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, or resulting security measures.
 - The war in Iraq.
3. Finally, the individual cannot receive or be eligible for any regular unemployment benefits in any state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or Canada.

No new applications for TEUC-A can be filed after December 27, 2003, and no TEUC-A benefits can be paid for any period after January 1, 2005.

For more information about TEUC-A and other extended unemployment benefits programs, visit <http://www.go2ui.com>.

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